A Survey on Cause And Effect of Stress on Professionals with Special Reference to IT Professionals in Pune District

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ABSTRACT *A state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and individual's ability and motivation to meet those needs is termed as stress. Stress is caused by various factors called as stressors. This survey is conducted to identify these stressors and reasons for their existence in the IT sector. Response was collected from the IT professionals in Pune district to identify whether they feel stressed, what are the causes of stress, and effect of stress on the organization. The research focused on IT sector and IT professionals for responses as IT sector has high attrition rates in current business environment. The survey is based on primary data collected through a sample size of 75. The data is analyzed statistically to infer results.*

INTRODUCTION

There is a sea change in working conditions in Indian Organizations after the arrival of liberalization, privatization, and globalization which has brought competition, restructuring, multiculturalism in the Indian organizations. Also it has brought new work-relationships, insecurity regarding job, future working conditions and rapid obsolesce of skills. The evolution of computer and information technology (hereinafter, IT) is perhaps one of the most dominating factors in the ever changing work-life today. The efficiencies empowered by IT has brought increasing acceptance of outsourcing models in global business and India has emerged as one of the leading destinations for outsourcing the back-office work. The Indian workforce in IT has earned an image of 'low cost' but 'high quality' technical workers, helping Indian IT industry to keep a promising growth rate. The Indian IT industry has brought a fundamental change in the MARKET of IT services globally. The productivity, efficiency, and low cost are centre stage issues for management of IT. Lot of research work has been done in the past decade addressing various issues of this sunshine industry. Currently, managing stress is one of the focus areas for IT organizations to address the significantly high attrition rate in the industry.

RESEARCH PURPOSE

This research paper is designed to focus on the various causes and effects of stress among the IT community confined to Pune region. Many IT companies have exercised strategy to minimize cost by trimming HR, also reducing facilities which have resulted in a growing frustrated environment leading to stress. Thus by this paper we intend to identify the various stressors among IT professionals and to study the effect of the same causing organizations to face certain problems resulting from stressed IT professionals.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the various causes of stress among the IT community in Pune district.
2. To study the cause and effect phenomenon of stress and their related existing problem in IT professionals.
3. To study the common problems faced by the IT professionals and the organization.

Literature on Stress

The word 'stress' originated from the English language (via Middle English) from the old French word 'destresse', which meant to be placed under narrowness or oppression (old French 'estresse) In its Middle English form it was 'distress' and now with the usage the 'di' got lost due to slurring, leaving two words 'stress' and 'distress'. Both these words now carry different meaning, 'Stress' is used as ambivalent while 'distress' always shows something unpleasant. According to Arnold (1991) the word stress has been derived from the Latin word 'stringo (stringer)' which meant to draw tight or to bind. In the fourteenth century, the term 'stress' entered the English language as a modified form of distress. In its early uses, it referred to a physical hardship or trial, but by the sixteenth century, it also indicated a form of physical injury. In these early uses, stress was seen as an unpleasant condition of the environment rather than of the individual. It was not until the seventeenth century that the word began to refer to an inner state (Hayward, 2005). The modern understanding of stress, which sees it as a combination of external forces and internal responses, only appears in the nineteenth century (Hayward, 2005). In the beginning of twentieth century, the term began to indicate 'overloading of the human body' in the medical science. (Arnold et.al., 1991; Kaila et.al., 2001). During the past two decades the term stress has been widely used in work organizations (Agarwala, Malhan & Singh, 1979).

In the western world Psychologist Walter B Cannon first attempted defining stress in psychological and behavioral context. He defined stress as a "fight or flight" syndrome (Cannon, 1932). Stress is defined by Robbins as "A dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint, or demand related to what he or she derives and for what the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important." The three potential factors that cause stress are: the environment, organization, and the individual. Certain amount of stress in life is inevitable but beyond a limit it has adverse affect on the quality of life of the individual. Stress has become a major concern for many organizations.

Experts say IT outsourcing services companies are also facing difficulty in winning deals at the traditional high-margin businesses. Since all of them are trying to maintain a

tight operating profit margin band, amid weakening revenue collection, this is getting reflected in attrition figures. "There is pressure on IT companies to cut prices on the services they are offering, as the scope for traditional business is limited. So, either they go for value addition services or cut the cost of human resources or both, to maintain the operating margin. This causes concern and worry in the minds of the employees leading to stress and high turnover for the IT sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Research was designed with a structured questionnaire where in all 75 respondents were selected randomly from IT companies in particularly Hinjewadi area of Pune.

Questionnaire consisted of 20 basic itemized questions pertaining to stress related problems in the work culture of IT companies. Later the data analysis was done along with interpretation.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Fig 1. Expected Causes of stress according to the study

(Source: Primary Data)
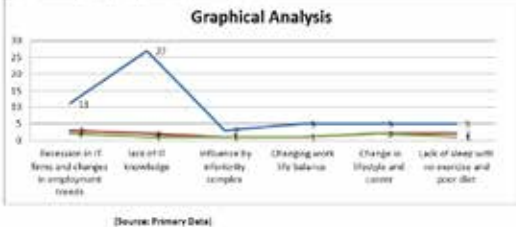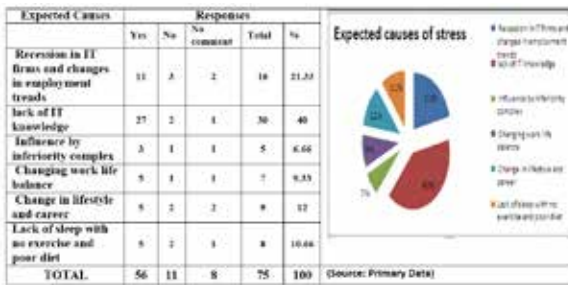
Interpretation:
On observation of the above table it is revealed that highest number of respondents 40% believe that due to poor management and Lack of IT knowledge they witness stress and is considered as a major stressor. Recession in the business environment is the second important cause for stress i.e. 21.33% followed by changing career and lifestyle 12%, imbalanced work life 9.33%, and inferiority complex 6.66% and lack of exercise and poor diet 10.66%.

Fig 2: Effect of stress on the organization

(Source: Primary Data)
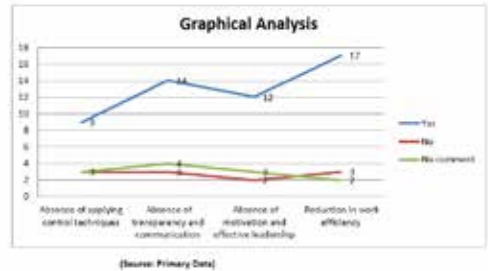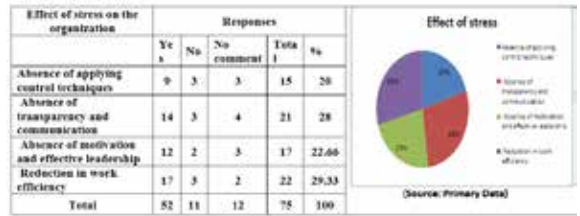
Interpretation:
From the above we analyze that the causes of stress mentioned in fig 1 has a major effect on work efficiency of IT professionals as 29% respondents agree to it. Another group of 28% of IT professional view that stress has an impact on transparency and communication within the organization. At the other end 22% IT professionals feel demotivated because of stress resulting into poor application of control techniques and initiatives adopted by the organization.

Fig 3: Problems faced by IT professionals at workplace
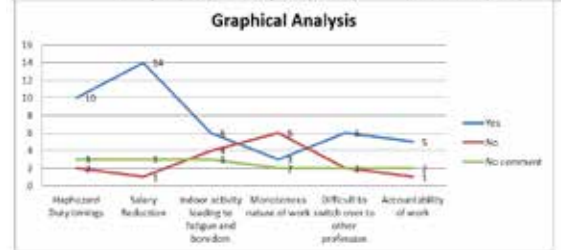

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:
The presence of stressors in the IT sector is because of some reasons. From the study we therefore could point out some problems faced by the IT professionals which cause stress. Here salary reduction is considered as prime problem as agreed by 24% of IT professionals followed by haphazard Duty timings with 20% responses. Monotonous nature of work is accepted by 14% respondents and 13% respondents opined the difficulty in switching profession as a problem faced by them in IT Sector.

Fig. 4: Total number of IT professionals Affected by stress

VIEW OF RESPONDENTS	NO OF EMPLOYEES	PERCENTAGE
Affected by stress	32	42.66
Not affected by stress	12	16
efficient but unwilling due to stress	16	21.33
Number of responses with no comments	15	20
Total	75	**100**

(Source: Primary Data)
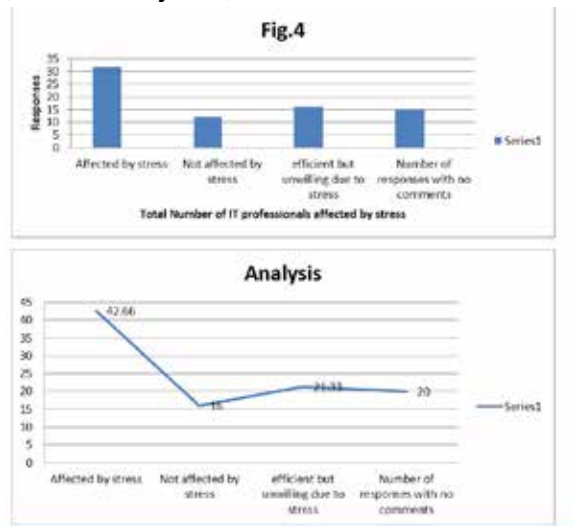
Interpretation:

From the overall study we analyze that 42.66% IT professionals are affected by stress whereas 16% are not. On the other hand 21.33% are unwilling to work because of stress creating frustration, demotivation and increasing chances of burn out among the IT professionals. There are 20% to professional who offered no comments on the affect of stress.

CONCLUSION

The researchers would conclude from the survey that stress is a major source of high attrition rates in the IT sector we see today. Some of the major reasons contributing to stress include changes in the business environment and working culture of these organizations caused by recession, change in employment trends, salary reduction, job insecurity, problems with work life balance and bad lifestyle habits. From the study we conclude that STRESS should not only be considered as a phenomenon but should be identified and tested among the employees to avoid its bad effects on the organizations. IT companies should therefore consider motivating their talented employees especially when facing crisis situation. Most of the IT companies focus only on short term plan neglecting long term opportunities which should allow them to improve business performance. IT companies should create recreational plans to motivate employees by designing some indoor games or activities and create excitement in their work culture.

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